

REMARKS

In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, further examination and reconsideration of the rejection in the Office Action of September 24, 2008 are respectfully requested.

On pages 2-5 of the Office Action, claims 1-8 are rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over EP 1101524 (EP '524) in view of US Patent 6,905,663 (Arno). This rejection is respectfully traversed for the reasons below, and its withdrawal is respectfully requested.

Claim 1 recites a method of treating an exhaust gas containing a fluorine compound comprising heating the exhaust gas in the presence of O₂, and then adding H₂O (claim 1) or H₂ (claim 5) to the exhaust gas to decompose or oxidize the fluorine compound. Such a method is not disclosed by EP '524 or Arno.

The EP '524 patent discloses heating of the exhaust gas in paragraph 17 of the specification. At lines 34-39 it is described that H₂ and/or H₂O, or H₂ and/or H₂O and O₂ are added *during* the heating. Thus, EP '524 discloses simultaneously heating the gas and adding H₂ and/or H₂O. However, claims 1 and 5 recite heating the exhaust gas, and *then* adding H₂O (claim 1) or H₂ (claim 5) to the exhaust gas.

Arno discloses injecting H₂O or H₂ from steam entrance 30 between a pre-heat stage 6 and an optional cooling stage 8 (see Figure 2 of Arno). Arno does not disclose heating the exhaust gas in the presence of O₂. Thus, modifying EP '524 according to the disclosure of Arno would still result in simultaneously heating the gas and adding H₂ and/or H₂O.

Thus, it is submitted that the combined disclosures of EP '524 and Arno do not disclose or suggest the present invention as recited in claims 1 and 5. Accordingly, it is submitted that claims 1 and 5 are allowable over the prior art of record, as are claims 2-4, 6-8, 15, and 16 depending therefrom.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is clearly in condition for allowance. An early notice thereof is earnestly solicited.

If, after reviewing this Amendment, the Examiner feels that there are any issues remaining which must be resolved before the application can be passed to issue, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner contact the undersigned by telephone in order to resolve such issues.

Respectfully submitted,

Yoichi MORI et al.

By: 

Aldo A. D'Ottavio

Registration No. 59,559

Agent for Applicants

AAD/JRF/kh/lkd
Washington, D.C. 20006-1021
Telephone (202) 721-8200
Facsimile (202) 721-8250
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